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## COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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### **Virginia Coal Mine Safety Board Recognizes Dink Shackleford and Benny Wampler**

**Big Stone Gap, VA** – The Virginia Coal Mine Safety Board issued resolutions during its October 10, 2007, meeting recognizing the accomplishments of the late Virginia Mining Association Executive Director Dink Shackleford and Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Deputy Director Benny Wampler.

Shackleford, who had guided the mining association for 17 years, passed away September 5, 2007, after a long battle with cancer. The Board wished to record its sense of loss at the death of Shackleford, noting that he was a tireless advocate for Southwest Virginia and the coal industry. In its resolution the Board also recognized his strength of character, his courage and his generosity, and his willingness to speak his mind with force and clarity, while never wavering in his fight for ideals.

Wampler was one of five people recently recognized nationally by the U.S. Department of Interior for their significant contributions to the regulation of coal mines and the reclamation of mined lands. He was congratulated by the Board in its resolution for the recognition he received during the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. The Board also stated that Wampler, who helped develop Virginia's permanent regulatory program for coal mining beginning in 1978, has been a guiding force and innovator for DMME and the Division of Mined Land Reclamation.

The Virginia Coal Mine Safety Board serves in an advisory capacity to the DMME on matters relating to the health and safety of persons working in Virginia's coal industry. The Board is also designated as the official regulatory work committee for the agency on all coal mine health and safety regulations not under the jurisdiction of the Board of Coal Mining Examiners. The Board consists of nine members appointed by the Governor and subject to confirmation of the General Assembly. ###